



**TEMPLE TERRACE
COMMUNICATIONS CENTER
NEWS RELEASE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TEMPLE TERRACE HONORS 2008 ‘FIRE DISPATCHER OF THE YEAR’

(TEMPLE TERRACE, FL. – 4/15/09) – Senior Communications Officer Leslie Arnold, a 10½-year veteran of the Temple Terrace Communications Center, was named the 2008 *“Fire Dispatcher of the Year”* during an awards ceremony Tuesday at City Hall.

Arnold, 40, received the award from Assistant Fire Chief Ian Kemp, who praised her outstanding skills and service to the community. To be named “Fire Dispatcher of the Year,” Arnold had to exceed the emergency medical protocol requirements of the National Academies of Emergency Medical Dispatch, which set rigorous standards for telecommunications professionals in fire, police and emergency medical services.

Arnold earned a 97-percent rating in handling emergency calls, said Communications Supervisor Stephen Cellucci, who called her a “dedicated” professional.

“The job is very stressful,” Cellucci said. “Whenever you answer the phone, you never know what you’re going to get. These communications officers deserve kudos every day for what they do.”

Arnold, who holds a bachelor’s degree in criminology from the University of South Florida, first became interested in the fire and police communications field at age 14, when she joined the Police Explorers program. She worked as a dispatcher while in college, she said, and later graduated from an accredited police academy.

After a short stint as a patrol officer in Gainesville, she returned to Temple Terrace as a full-time dispatcher in 1998. She said she finds the job rewarding.

“Just helping people,” she said, “and the camaraderie here in the dispatch center. And, we can help catch the bad guys.”

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Arnold and her husband, Grant, have two children.

The Temple Terrace Communications Center is a primary 9-1-1 call center for Hillsborough County, handling nearly 10,000 emergency calls per year and more than 30,000 annual calls for service. With a staff of 13 full-time communications officers, the Temple Terrace Communications Center consistently provides residents with quality service and outstanding response times.

This week, the communications center is celebrating *National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week* (April 12-18, 2009). The commemoration was established by Congress in 1992 at the behest of the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials. The week is dedicated to honoring the individuals who provide 9-1-1 assistance to callers across the country.

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